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# THE JERUSALEM POST

VOLUME LXIII, NUMBER 19305

THURSDAY, JUNE 20, 1991

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Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu (center) chairs his first cabinet meeting yesterday in Jerusalem. (Isaac Harari)

## Ivry to head National Security Council

PRIME Minister Binyamin Netanyahu began his first full day in office yesterday by leading his cabinet to a variety of decisions and appointments that will concentrate greater power in his hands.

Two new bodies were established - a National Security Council (NSC) and a Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) - which will enable more executive decisions to be made in the Prime Minister's Office.

The NSC, to be headed by longtime Defense Ministry Director-General David Ivry, a former OC Air Force, is to coordinate the different security branches of the government. Netanyahu met with Ivry yesterday to discuss his duties.

The cabinet also approved moving the supervision of the Israel Broadcasting Authority from the Communications Ministry to the Prime Minister's Office. Wags said the body might now be called the BIBIC.

During the election campaign, Netanyahu pledged to privatize the body.

Netanyahu has also declared his intention to focus on economic reform, budget cutting, and privatization. A ministerial panel on the latter, to be headed by Netanyahu, was also established yesterday.

## Sharon 'mega ministry' still on hold

THE creation of a new national infrastructure portfolio for Likud MK Ariel Sharon appeared last night a far more difficult mission than had initially been supposed. Most ministers who would have to contribute spheres of influence to the new ministry expressed vehement opposition to doing so yesterday.

Sharon asked to meet with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and today is to send him an exhaustive report he has compiled on what the new ministry must encompass.

Those around Netanyahu exuded optimism yesterday that the matter would be resolved "in a few days." They did not explain what their optimism was based on.

In sharp contrast to the haste in which the idea of the new ministry was floated on Tuesday, nothing happened on the matter yesterday at Netanyahu's end. Foreign Minister David Levy, chief catalyst in the moves to custom-tailor a ministry for Sharon, was silent and inactive on Sharon's behalf as well.

There is no certainty such a ministry could be established. Its components would have to come from the Agriculture, Construction and Housing, Energy, and

Transport ministries. These ministers, who derided Sharon's absence from the cabinet and warmly urged his co-optation on Tuesday, let it be known they do not want his entry to be at their expense.

"It is ridiculous to take the Water Commission out of the Agriculture Ministry," Agriculture Minister Rafael Eitan said. "Without it, there is no ministry... If they insist on transferring the commission to the new ministry, then Netanyahu will have to choose whether he wants me or Arif in the government." This is considered a very potent threat, since Eitan heads the five-man Tsomet faction within the Likud.

The National Religious Party's Yitzhak Levy, who took over both the Energy and Transport ministries, had a nearly identical message. "I was given whole portfolios and not parts of portfolios, and I intend to keep my portfolios intact." The new ministry would swallow the Energy Ministry and bite into Transport, removing from it the railways, sea ports, and the planning of new airports.

United Torah Judaism has already announced it will object to removing any-

thing from the Construction and Housing Ministry, including the Public Works Department, which is responsible for road construction around the country, and the Rural Development Department.

Sharon is expected to pressure Netanyahu to play hardball with the rejectionist ministers. He phoned Netanyahu yesterday to make a date and informed him he intends to present him with a thick file and a team of experts who have prepared listing what the new ministry must include. As Levy envisioned the ministry, it would be one of the largest and most powerful in the government.

Formally, Sharon has not yet given his consent to accepting the portfolio and he will not do so until he knows what it will include. Sharon will not accept anything less than what was originally discussed with him Tuesday night, say his aides. He would like a team assigned by Netanyahu to meet with his team and come up with a description of the new portfolio.

Political observers agreed yesterday that Sharon must act soon or miss his opportunity. The more time goes by, the less help Sharon is likely to get from his Likud allies, who will have settled into their own jobs and may forget his cause.

## Cabinet to meet on Fridays

DAVID MAKOVSKY

IN A bid to raise his ministers' productivity, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu told the first cabinet meeting yesterday that its weekly sessions will now be held on Friday instead of Sunday.

Newly named cabinet secretary Danny Naveh told reporters: "The prime minister wants ministers to work a five-day week without interruption," with Friday being the sixth day that can be devoted to cabinet matters.

Religious ministers noted the change may have to be reconsidered if a long cabinet debate is expected during the winter, when Shabbat begins early.

Some observers believe one of the byproducts of the decision will be less grandstanding by ministers, who up to now have tended to make grandiloquent statements after meetings in the hope that they would be quoted. There are no newspapers on Saturday.

## Court delays ruling on Ne'eman appointment

THE High Court of Justice yesterday deferred a final decision on the propriety of Ya'acov Ne'eman's appointment as justice minister, but said there was no reason for him not to take office in the meantime.

The court was hearing a petition by *Globe's* journalist Yoav Yitzhak, who claimed Ne'eman's appointment is inappropriate because of various criminal acts Ne'eman had allegedly committed. Justices Gavriel Bach, Ya'akov Kedmi and Dalia Dorner quickly dismissed most of Yitzhak's allegations as groundless. But they were troubled by an allegation that Ne'eman tried to persuade a witness in the trial of Shas MK Aryeh Deri not to cooperate with police.

The witness, Martin Brown, testified in England this week. In the course of his testimony, a 1992 police memorandum was submitted that allegedly detailed a phone conversation between Brown and Dep.-Cmdr. Meir Gilboa of the Israel Police. According to the memorandum, Brown called Gilboa after making his statement to the police, and complained that Ne'eman had summoned him to his office the following day and asked: "What are you doing helping the police?" Brown said Ne'eman made similar statements on other occasions thereafter, the memorandum continued, and charged that Ne'eman's interference came after Deri had appointed him to chair an Interior Ministry committee.

Both Ne'eman and Brown deny such an event ever took place. In an affidavit to the court,

Ne'eman said Brown had called him after giving his statement and complained that the police pressured him into saying things that were untrue, and that he had advised Brown to make a statement about this as well. Gilboa was never questioned about the issue during his testimony in the Deri trial.

Attorney-General Michael Ben-Yair told the court "there was no choice but to open a preliminary inquiry into the matter, for the sake of determining whether there is enough evidence to justify the opening of a police investigation."

The justices lambasted the State Attorney's Office, saying there was no excuse for having waited four years to conduct the inquiry. They rejected government attorney Uzi Fogelman's explanation that when such a "side" issue arises, long delays are common, since investigating the side issue before the witness in question has testified could damage the main case.

"A witness goes to the police and says: 'They're pressuring me.' How is it possible to wait several years and only then say: 'We'll look into it?'" Kedmi asked. "When you say 'there is no choice [but to look into this],' that implies it's a serious matter. If it's a serious matter, why didn't you investigate immediately?"

Furthermore, Bach noted, it is not clear what crime the State Attorney's Office thinks might have been committed, since the alleged pressure took place after Brown had given his statement.

Regarding the other charges raised by Yitzhak, both Ne'eman and Ben-Yair told the court they were baseless. Two of these charges were that Ne'eman had fraudulently obtained the refund

of a NIS 25,000 court fee, and that he had submitted a false report clearing the managers of the Kochav Hashomron company of wrongdoing while serving as the company's liquidator. In both cases, the state had found no reason to open a criminal investigation, and the High Court of Justice had upheld this decision.

A third case revolved around Ne'eman's role in obtaining a pardon - before charges had even been filed - for four GSS officials who shot a captured terrorist. Ne'eman said he had not suggested this move, but was simply asked by then prime minister Shimon Peres whether such a step would be legal, and had advised Peres that it would be. The High Court later upheld his opinion.

A fourth affair was the Bejski Commission's finding that Ne'eman was partially responsible for the 1983 bank shares collapse. However, the state noted that the commission did not recommend criminal charges against Ne'eman, nor did it bar him from any post except director-general of the Finance Ministry.

Finally, Yitzhak charged that Ne'eman took money from Avraham Shapira's Carmel Carpets company while representing US-based MAT Investment Corp - one of the firm's creditors. Ne'eman said the payment had been requested by MAT, since in the US it is standard practice for borrowers to pay the legal fees incurred by lenders trying to recoup their money.

Ne'eman said the entire petition stemmed from his successful representation of a client in a slander suit against Yitzhak. "This is a vindictive nuisance petition filed by a petitioner who has made it a personal goal to plot against me," Ne'eman wrote. "There is no evidence to support Yoav Yitzhak's baseless accusations."

## Levy: Arabs should not look for trouble

New foreign minister calls Arafat Israel's 'partner'

DAVID MAKOVSKY

ARAB leaders at the Cairo summit this weekend should not increase "unnecessary" tensions, but rather seek ways of cooperating with the new government, Foreign Minister David Levy said yesterday.

But as he began his tenure, tough statements from the Arab world escalated in reaction to the government's guidelines. "The tension which they are trying to produce is unnecessary, completely unnecessary," Levy told reporters after he and his predecessor, Ehud Barak, spoke at the changeover ceremony at the Foreign Ministry. "I expect to hear from this summit, which is due to take place in the coming days, a message of peace, a warm hand towards the State of Israel so that we will be able to work together."

Levy's statements differed, at least in tone, from those of Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu. Speaking of Syria, he said: "If

both sides want peace - and we want peace - we'll meet in the middle."

Asked if he would meet Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, he called him Israel's "partner" and said he does not rule out anything.

"We said there's a partner. We didn't create him; he's a fact on the ground. We're interested in conducting the dialogue with him on continuing the peace process on the condition that he keeps his commitments."

Arafat was one of the few Arab leaders not mentioned by Netanyahu during his inaugural Knesset speech on Tuesday. Meanwhile, Syrian officials are reportedly pushing for the Cairo summit to issue a declaration urging Arab states not to continue with normalization until the peace process goes forward, and even urging those states which

lifted their economic boycott of Israel to reinstate it.

Syria wants a united Arab front against the "aggressive" policies of Netanyahu, Reuters quoted one Syrian official.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa, who sources say is working with his Syrian counterpart Farouk Shara to toughen the final communiqué, said that "even if [Netanyahu's Knesset speech] contained talk of peace and welcomed good relations with neighboring countries, it was nevertheless full of noes. If this speech made anything clear, it made clear the hard-line Israeli position, which is something which can only have negative effects on the peace process."

Aides to Netanyahu deny this, insisting Netanyahu is committed to the peace process. They point out that in his speech, he had sure to specify that Israel is "not against Islam" and does not equate the militancy of Hamas with Islamic doctrine.

Mahmoud Abbas, who heads the Palestinian team preparing for the final-status negotiations, told the Palestinian news agency WAF that Netanyahu's "policy guidelines carry many noes which contradict the spirit of peace."

Arafat, speaking in China during a visit to the Far East, said the Oslo accords were an international agreement rather than a bilateral one between the Palestinians and Israel.

"Now is the turn of the international community," he said. "I am not alone now. We hope everyone will be committed to what has been agreed upon."

Foreign Ministry deputy director-general Eitan Bentzur, who worked closely with Levy during his previous tenure in the office from 1990-1992, is widely rumored as his new choice to be the new director-general.



## EU softens stance towards Netanyahu

DAVID MAKOVSKY

THERE are some signs that the European Union (EU) is favoring dialog over confrontation with the new Netanyahu government, diplomatic sources say.

In a meeting of Foreign Ministry directors in Rome Tuesday before the semiannual summit of EU heads over the weekend, European diplomats did not reinsert a draft deleted 10 days earlier which explicitly called on European dignitaries to visit "Palestinian institutions" and called on Israel to accept the return of refugees.

Instead, the Middle East section of the upcoming Florence declaration is expected to merely accentuate the need to adhere to the existing peace process.

early draft came before the Israeli elections. Now there is a new political environment, and Europe wants to take Israeli public opinion into account. I think Europe wants to avoid finger-pointing and give Netanyahu a chance."

Even if this declaration is passed in its current form in Florence, it does not necessarily mean that European foreign ministers will stop visiting Orient House. Though Orient House may no longer be a matter of EU principle, it may remain one of EU practice. Or alternatively, each EU country may now have greater latitude to reach its own decision on the matter.

Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert has suggested that if foreign officials stop visiting Orient House, this would depoliticize the issue, and enable the Likud to stop insisting on its closure, as promised in its recent campaign.

Diplomatic sources believe that one factor which influenced the EU draft was Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's remarks at the Knesset just hours earlier, in which he welcomed an EU role in the peace process. Moreover, new Foreign Minister David Levy is known as a Europhile.

Israeli embassies throughout Europe have quietly suggesting that dialog must be tried. This is thought to be part of the reason why diplomats have decided to avoid a confrontational tone at this time.

















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Key Representative Rates table showing US dollar, Sterling, and Mark exchange rates against the NIS.

Buchanan steps into China trade fracas

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Conservative commentator Pat Buchanan, still technically keeping his hat in the ring for the Republican US presidential nomination, yesterday launched a television campaign urging Congress to defeat extension of favorable tariffs to China.

TEL AVIV STOCKS

Large table of stock market data for Tel Aviv, including Commercial, Industrial, Mortgage Banks & Finance, Insurance, Trade & Services, and various other sectors.

US losses, threat of interest hike bring down stocks

TEL AVIV STOCK MARKET table showing indices: 203.57 (-1.15%) and 214.72 (-1.12%).

THE stock market fell yesterday after three days of gains, following Tuesday's losses on Wall Street, particularly by Israeli technology companies, and amid expectations that the Bank of Israel will raise interest rates.

UK shares down slightly

LONDON (Reuters) - Here is how major stock markets outside the United States ended yesterday.

WORLD MARKET ROUNDUP

LONDON (Reuters) - Leading UK shares mostly closed at slightly lower levels yesterday, largely unimpressed by a sudden sharp rise in the Dow, though ending the session towards the top end of the day's tight trading range.

Stocks mostly lower

NEW YORK (AP) - Blue-chip issues managed some gains yesterday, but stocks were mostly lower with bonds as investors advanced to show hesitance in advance of the Federal Reserve's meeting on interest rates in early July.

CURRENCY CROSS-RATES

Table showing currency exchange rates for Mark, Sterling, Yen, SFY, and FFY.

Tobacco companies sued by nicotine-addicted smokers

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Five major tobacco companies were sued yesterday by New Yorkers claiming to be addicted to nicotine, in the biggest fallout so far from last month's dismissal of a national federal class action against the industry.

"We allege that they knew nicotine is addictive but they concealed that from the consuming public in order to sell more cigarettes and make more money," said Bracht, one of the lawyers who filed the cases.

Takeover Panel warns on European move

LONDON (Reuters) - Britain's Takeover Panel, which polices London's busy mergers and acquisitions market, said yesterday a European directive on statutory regulation would damage the market and lead to multi-million-pound lawsuits.

Canada panel expected to support Arctic diamond mine

VANCOUVER (Reuters) - A diamond mine proposed for Canada's Arctic is expected to gain the support of a government-appointed review panel in the next several days, analysts and officials said.

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# IAI's \$650m. F-4 deal with Turkey in jeopardy

DAVID MAKOVSKY

IF THE consortium of banks led by Bank Hapoalim continues to delay issuing a promised loan to Turkey so that the country can have its Phantom F-4 jets refurbished in Israel, it could jeopardize the entire \$650 million deal, as there is a growing threat that an Islamic party will gain power in Ankara.

This message was conveyed in an urgent memorandum to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday from Zvi Elpeleg, Israel's ambassador to Turkey, diplomatic sources say. It apparently is being reinforced by President Ezer Weizman, who visited Turkey last week. Under the deal agreed upon half a year ago, Israel agreed to offer state-backed guarantees so there would be no risk to the banks providing the loan, presuming the banks involved are Israeli. Therefore, it remains unclear why Bank Hapoalim is holding up the loan, though diplomatic sources suggest that the bank wants leverage in order to obtain IAI payment on an entirely different matter.

The sense of urgency of Elpeleg's message is due to a growing concern that the Islamic Refah party will shortly be part of a governing coalition. This party opposes Turkey's sharply expanding ties with Israel.



Israel Women's Network chairman Prof. Alice Shalvi (center) makes a point at yesterday's breakfast meeting with women MKs. From left: Naomi Blumenthal (Likud), Tamar Gozansky (Hadash), Anat Maor (Meretz), Shalvi, Sofia Landver (Labor), Naomi Chazan (Meretz). (Sark Uziel)

# Amir removed from court

RAINE MARCUS

JUDGE Amnon Strashnov ordered Yigal Amir removed from court yesterday after his testimony for the defense in the trial of himself, his brother Haggai and Dror Adani devolved into a bitter exchange.

Following heated arguments between Amir and prosecutor Penina Guy, Judge Strashnov asked Amir if his brother knew of the pistol used to murder prime minister Yitzhak Rabin. Amir raised his voice and shouted: "In any case, you only hear what you want to hear! Be objective!"

Strashnov banged on the table and threatened to find him in contempt of court.

"Oh yes, and what sentence will I get?" sneered Amir. "100 years?" He was taken by police from the courtroom and brought back later.

Yesterday Amir repeated that neither Adani - who he described as a casual acquaintance - nor his brother were involved in the plot to kill Rabin and hurt Arabs. He said he told Adani his views on the possible murder of Rabin, but that Adani dismissed any such idea because he felt it would lead to civil war.

"He [Adani] said there was a *din rodef* against Rabin but it was forbidden to implement it," said

Amir. Following Amir's testimony, his brother Haggai, a former Givati soldier and a self-professed expert in firearms, told the court that for years huge amounts of IDF ammunition and explosives were freely available "in the field."

He was responding to charges of illegal possession of ammunition and bombs found at his family's Herzliya home. Haggai also manufactured the hollowpoint bullets used by his brother in Rabin's assassination.

"I didn't believe that murdering Rabin was the answer," he continued, "but I gave my brother ideas, ideas for which he would need me, so I would have control over him."

Former Eyal organization leader and GSS informer Avishai Raviv was supposed to appear for the defense yesterday, but he could not be found. Margalit Har-Shefi, arrested in connection with the murder plot, was also summoned, but her lawyer asked for an adjournment so she could receive suitable legal advice. Evidence against her has been transferred to the District Attorney's Office, but charges have not yet been brought. Judges Strashnov, Ze'ev Hammer and Shelly Timen agreed to postpone her testimony until mid-July.

# Lobby to women MKs: Day-care subsidies, long school day are priorities

ESTHER HECHT

THE first item on the women's agenda in the 14th Knesset should be the establishment of a state authority on the status of women. A long school day for all children and appropriate day-care subsidies are the next two priorities, for they will enable women to hold full-time jobs.

These were part of a 14-point "guideline" presented to women MKs yesterday at a breakfast meeting with the Israel Women's Network, a nonpartisan women's lobby.

Six of the nine women MKs attended the breakfast meeting, which has become an annual tradition. Achieving these goals will be no simple matter. MK Yael Dayan (Labor) said, because the only point regarding women on which there is consensus in the Knesset is the need to combat domestic violence. Dayan, co-chaired the Knesset Committee on the Status of Women, established as an ad hoc body in 1992

and declared a permanent committee in 1996.

The 13th Knesset made significant progress, passing 41 laws and amendments relating to the status of women, said IWN chairman Prof. Alice Shalvi, who hosted the meeting at her Jerusalem home. "Most of these resulted from the committee's work, and this shows the power of working together," she said.

But laws are not enough, according to Rachel Ben-Ziman, IWN's legal adviser. Regarding equal opportunity in the workplace, Israel has good laws but poor enforcement, she said. What is needed now is a public body to see to enforcement.

MK Naomi Chazan (Meretz) foresees much of the effort concerning women as preventing erosion of previous, hard-won achievements. Even more important, she said, is enlisting women to change the current electoral system, which works against women's political power.

# Sara Netanyahu unsure she will attend her HU graduation

SARA Netanyahu, the wife of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, is to receive her MA in psychology from Hebrew University today, but as of yesterday, she still had not decided whether she would attend the graduation ceremony.

"I still haven't decided," she told Army Radio. "I am thinking of all the difficulties the other attendees would have to face if my husband and I attended."

She indicated that she intends to continue working as a child psychologist.

"I hope that in several respects our life will remain as it has been. We have small children, and we will continue to raise them as normal children. I have a career, and I intend to continue with it. In other areas, of course, we hope to cope with the changes."

The security blanket that surrounds the prime minister in post-assassination Israel is one of the things with which the Netanyahu will have to cope.

"This is one of the things we have to accept," she said, "and we accept it with great understanding." (Itim)

WEATHER forecast: Partly cloudy, warmer. AROUND THE WORLD table with weather data for various cities.

# Israeli Arabs concerned over new government's minority guidelines

DAVID RUDGE

ISRAELI Arab council heads are to meet in Shfaram today to consider their reaction to the guidelines of the new government regarding the Arab sector.

Some Arab politicians described the guidelines as highly controversial, especially the clauses pledging to advance those minorities which have joined their fate with the Jewish people, and which have

served in the security forces. "We see the composition of the new government and its guidelines as a black prophecy for the two peoples, the peace process and the hopes for equality," said Hadash secretary-general Mohammed Baraky.

"The government is treating the community as distinct ethnic groups and making equality con-

ditional on military service - something no other government has ever done," he said.

"This is something which is arousing strong, angry reactions among the Arab community in Israel. I'm very concerned that if this government does not realize the mistakes it is making, it could

lead to a new cycle of violence and bloodletting," he added.

Ibrahim Sarsur, head of Kafr Kassem local council in the Triangle and a leading member of the Islamic Movement, also expressed concern and disappointment.

"On the basis of the guidelines,

I don't feel that this government is going on the right path towards establishing peace in the Middle East and achieving equality inside the State of Israel," he said.

"If I were to judge this government on the basis of its guidelines, then it would seem it has no chance of succeeding in facing the problems in the Middle East."

to wait and see how the government acts in practice," said Sarsur.

Hussein Suleiman, spokesman for the forum of Arab Council Heads, said there were some aspects of the government's guidelines which were encouraging, including the promise to increase the budgets of local Arab authorities, but that other features were "not to our taste."

# Man convicted of murder after 15 years

RAINE MARCUS

A MAN accused of killing postal worker Raymond Smadja some 15 years ago was convicted of his murder by Tel Aviv District Court yesterday. But Ronen Ben-Shitreet, 32, of Bat Yam, could have been a free man had he taken his lawyers' advice and confessed to killing Smadja in self-defense. Ben-Shitreet, a former laboratory assistant at the National Forensic Institute at Abu Kabir, was arrested around six months ago after his wife accused him of beating her. But when his fingerprints were taken, they were matched by computer with a print taken from the scene of Smadja's unsolved murder on August 16, 1981. He was then charged with the crime.

Ben-Shitreet, a juvenile at the time of the killing, admitted killing Smadja, but said he had acted in self-defense when the victim tried to rape him. Because the statute of limitations on manslaughter had expired, he would probably have been freed had he stuck to his story and had the judges believed it. But Ben-Shitreet decided to plead not guilty to murder, maintaining he had not stabbed Smadja to death. Although his lawyers, David Yiftah and Moshe Meroz, advised him to admit killing Smadja in self-defense, Ben-Shitreet insisted he was innocent and went ahead with the trial. Yesterday Judges Shelly Timen and Ze'ev Hammer voted to convict him of premeditated murder, while Judge Amnon Strashnov found him guilty of manslaughter. His lawyers said they would appeal the conviction to the Supreme Court.

# Ashkelon reconsidering ban on sale of pork

EVELYN GORDON

THE High Court of Justice has given the city of Ashkelon 60 days to reconsider a by-law banning the sale of pork and pork products in the city.

A group of merchants had challenged the by-law in a petition to the court last year, charging that it violates the Basic Law: Freedom of Occupation. The merchants also argued that the law is inappropriate to the new character of the city. Over the past few years, many new immigrants from the CIS have moved to Ashkelon, and these immigrants - many of whom eat pork - now make up about one-quarter of the city's population, the petition said. At a hearing yesterday, Justices Gavriel Bach, Dalia Dorer, and Yitzhak Zamir indicated that they saw merit in the petition, and were therefore prepared to issue a show-cause order. However, the city then asked for a 60-day extension in which to re-evaluate the law. The court agreed, and refrained from issuing the order.

# NEWS IN BRIEF

Agency continuing activity in Russia Russia has promised to restore the license of the Jewish Agency, the organization said in a statement yesterday. Spokeswoman Lisa Gann-Perkal said agency officials who recently visited Russia received verbal assurances that the organization, which lost its license two months ago because of unspecified "breaches" of Russian law, would be re-accredited. "Our activity [in Russia] is more or less continuing," she said. A statement by the agency said Russian officials promised to "make every effort to complete the registration process as quickly as possible." AP

Chlorine poisoning closes kibbutz pool The Health Ministry yesterday closed the swimming pool at Kibbutz Sha'alvim after a six-year-old boy was seriously hurt from chlorine gas emissions there. The child was in serious condition in the respiratory intensive care unit of Assaf Harofeh Hospital in Tzrifin; two other children affected by the gas were treated and sent home. Due to an electrical failure yesterday morning, a large amount of chlorine fumes leaked into the air at the pool. The ministry said the pool was operating without a license and that its infrastructure and maintenance were inadequate. It will be closed until further notice. Judy Siegel

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